Controlling pollution

Controlling pollution depends on the efforts of governments, scientists, business and industry, agriculture, environmental organizations, and individuals.

**Agriculture.** Scientists and farmers are developing ways to grow food that require less fertilizer and pesticides. Many farmers rotate their crops from year to year to reduce the need for chemical fertilizers. The rotation of corn, wheat, and other crops with legumes, such as alfalfa and soybeans, helps replace nitrogen lost from the soil. Crop rotation also helps control pests and plant diseases. Some farmers use compost and other fertilizers that are less harmful to the soil. Instead of spraying their crops with harmful pesticides, some farmers combat damaging insects by releasing other insects or bacteria that prey upon the pests. Scientists are also developing genetically engineered plants that are resistant to certain pests.The rotation of crops and the use of natural pest enemies are called natural pest control. Combining a limited use of chemical pesticides with natural controls is known as integrated pest management (IPM). Farmers using IPM apply chemical pesticides in smaller amounts and only when they will have the most effect.

**Environmental organizations** work to help control pollution by trying to influence lawmakers and to elect political leaders who care about the environment. Some groups raise money to buy land and protect it from development. Other groups study the effects of pollution on the environment and develop pollution prevention and management systems. Such groups use their findings to persuade government and industry to prevent or reduce pollution. Environmental organizations also publish magazines and other materials to persuade people to prevent pollution.  Political parties representing environmental concerns have formed in many industrial nations. These organizations, often known as Green parties, have had a growing influence on environmental policies. Countries with Green parties include Australia, Austria, Germany, Finland, France, New Zealand, Spain, and Sweden.

**Individual efforts.** One of the most important ways an individual can reduce pollution is by conserving energy. Conserving energy reduces the air pollution created by power plants. A reduced demand for oil and coal could also result in fewer oil spills and less destruction of coal-bearing lands. Driving less is one of the best ways to save energy and avoid polluting the air.  People can save electric power by buying more efficient light bulbs and home appliances. For example, compact fluorescent light bulbs use only 25 percent as much electric power as traditional incandescent bulbs. People can also conserve by using appliances less often, by turning off appliances and lights when not in use, and by setting home thermostats at or below 68 °F (20 °C) in winter and at or above 78 °F (26 °C) in summer. In addition, buildings with specially treated windows and good insulation need far less fuel or electric power to heat or cool than buildings without such materials.  People can also buy products that are safe for the environment. For example, households can help reduce water pollution by using fewer toxic cleaning products and by properly disposing of any toxic products they do use. If consumers refuse to purchase harmful products, manufacturers will stop making them.  Many cities and towns have recycling programs. Recycling saves energy and raw materials, and it prevents pollution. Many different waste products can be recycled. Commonly recycled wastes include metal cans, glass, paper, plastic containers, and old tires. Cans can be melted down and used to make new ones. Glass can be ground up and made into new containers or used as a substitute for sand in road pavement. Paper can be reprocessed into different paper products. Plastics can be melted down and re-formed into plastic lumber for such uses as fences, decks, and benches. They can also be reused to make carpeting. Old tires can be burned to produce energy. They can also be ground up and added to asphalt or some other adhesive to make roadbeds or such molded products as floor mats and playground equipment.

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